



United States Air Force

# ONLINE news

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Vol. 1, No. 3

The official USAF newspaper (<http://www.af.mil/newspaper>)

March 31, 1999

## NEWSBYTES

### Air Force prepares for Y2K

by Lori Manske

*Air Force Communications Agency*

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILL.

(AFPN) — As the millennium countdown continues, officials are confident the Air Force will be ready to handle the Y2K bug.

March 31 marks a readiness check for the Department of

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### House starts work on FY 2000 budget

WASHINGTON (AFPN) —

Before starting its spring break, the House of Representatives took its first steps to enact the fiscal year 2000 defense budget.

Introduced March 1, the Securing America's Future Uniformed Services Act of 1999 moves the House closer to endorsing the

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### 'Melissa' and 'Papa' infect computers

by Staff Sgt. Michael Dorsey

*Air Force Print News*

WASHINGTON — Hot on the heels of one irritating computer virus has come one more hostile in nature. In both cases, the Department of Defense and America's private sector have had to react quickly to prevent damage to worldwide computer networks.

"Melissa" struck first, hitting computer systems hard March 26. It

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## Kosovo operation continues

by Senior Master Sgt.

Jim Katzaman

*Air Force Print News*

WASHINGTON — As

Operation Allied Force neared the end of its first week of air strikes in Yugoslavia, Pentagon spokesman Ken Bacon said NATO was in "a race against Milosevic" to halt atrocities against the Kosovar people.

Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic's rejection of proposed peace accords, along with continued assaults and executions of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo led NATO to launch Allied Force March 24.

Allied forces shot down five Yugoslav MiG-29s in the first nights of



*Photo by Senior Airman Jeff Fitch*

A B-52H, assigned to Barksdale Air Force Base, La., lifts off March 24 at RAF Fairford, England, to support NATO operations in the former Yugoslavia.

the air war, losing one F-117A Nighthawk to still undetermined causes March 27.

Speaking March 26 to the Altus, Okla.,

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## Anthrax vaccine safe, effective

by Master Sgt. Linda Brandon

*Air Force Print News*

WASHINGTON — A "life or death" message was delivered to Congress by the Air Force Surgeon General regarding recent controversy surrounding the Department of Defense's mandatory anthrax vaccine immunization program.

Calling the disease deadly and the vaccine safe and effective, Lt. Gen. Charles H. Roadman II testified, "When it comes to pulmonary anthrax, there is one clear and simple truth. If you are not vaccinated, if you inhale the

spores, you almost certainly will die."

He likened anthrax's 99 percent mortality rate (for the unprotected) to that of the ebola virus. He told representatives that although initial symptoms to anthrax exposure are flu-like, "the difference is that in three days you will be dead."

However, because vaccination turns the tables, skyrocketing survival odds to 99 percent, Roadman called the vaccine necessary and vital for a force required to be ready to deploy any-

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## Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at

<http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>

Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Also, there will typically be more letters in the online version than in this printed version. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

## Pride, tradition key to retention

... I didn't join the Air Force for the money. I joined knowing that I may have to make the ultimate sacrifice for my country... If you told me that you would give me a million dollars to die, I would say you're crazy. If you told me to die for my country, I would... I don't care how much money you make; you're only going to stay in a job if you like it. Bring back the military-looking uniforms, the traditions of the Air Force and the pride.

**Senior Airman Greg Volkman**  
*Robins AFB, Georgia*

## Praying for our troops in Kosovo

To all NATO and U.S. service personnel, I want to wish and pray for your safe

and successful mission. I should not forget those Air Force people who are flying missions all the way from the United States. May God guide you, bless you and keep you safe and secure during this important mission.

**Maj. Billy J. Young (ret.)**

*"Military careerman," 1951-1971*

## Support actions in Kosovo

I agree with what we are doing in Kosovo. Anytime innocent people are being slaughtered, somebody should step in to help them. Being the greatest military in the world right now, the U.S. should be there for the Albanians.

**Airman 1st Class Matthew Bianco**  
*Dyess AFB, Texas*

# Anthrax: Fear the disease, not the vaccine

by **Lt. Gen. Charles H. Roadman II**  
*Air Force Surgeon General*

**W**hen it comes to anthrax, there is one clear and simple truth: If you are not vaccinated and you inhale anthrax, you will almost certainly die. Period.

As surgeon general, it is my duty to protect the health of airmen. This duty also requires me to be the Air Force's point man in the war to combat diseases turned into weapons of mass destruction. Our greatest biological enemy right now is anthrax, and our strongest weapon against it is vaccination.

I personally have no doubts or concerns about the anthrax vaccine. As a physician, a husband and a father, I certainly wouldn't ask anyone to do something I wouldn't do myself. I have completed my anthrax vaccine series and have no worries about its safety and effectiveness. In fact, I am so convinced of the vaccine's life-saving benefits, I would encourage my own family to receive the shots if the availability develops.

The reason I'm so convinced of the anthrax vaccine's safety is because the science supporting it is long-standing and credible. This is not a new or

experimental vaccine. It has been licensed by the Food and Drug Administration and in use for almost 30 years in both the civilian and military populations. There has never been any question of its effectiveness and safety. What is in question are people's perceptions, simply because this vaccine is relatively unfamiliar.

Many years ago, people were unfamiliar with the smallpox and polio vaccines. Although some may have initially feared the vaccines, people quickly understood the consequences if they were not inoculated. The fear of the disease quickly outweighed the fear of the vaccines.

Unfortunately, the anthrax vaccine has been getting unreasonable criticism in some circles. In particular, a few people have posted incorrect information on Internet sites and distributed it through email campaigns. Although their intentions may seem well meaning, these critics try to build fear about the vaccine. Yet, it is interesting to note they say little about the horrifying consequences of contracting anthrax. Truly accurate information will make it evident to fear the disease, not the vaccine.

As an expeditionary force, we must be ready to deploy anywhere, anytime. This means we must be ready on a moment's notice with people who are fit and healthy. If our country must send us into harm's way, we have to be equipped with every possible form of protection available. Losing even one person when it can be prevented is

inexcusable. That's why it is mandatory for all service members to be vaccinated.

Mass casualties would also degrade our mission capability. We wouldn't send people into battle without helmets and weapons, so we should also provide the best possible armor against biological dangers. That armor is immunization.

Commanders, airmen and family members must become informed about anthrax. Be sure to get accurate facts from reliable sources. Ask your commander about the threat. Ask your doctor about the vaccine. Then keep in mind three things: The threat is very real. Anthrax is a killer. The vaccine will save your life.

For more information, check out

■ [www.defenselink.mil](http://www.defenselink.mil)

■ [www.af.mil/current/anthrax](http://www.af.mil/current/anthrax)

■ [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.af.mil/current/anthrax](http://www.af.mil/current/anthrax)

Anthrax



Photo by Senior Airman Jeffrey Allen

*A crew chief from the 23rd Fighter Squadron, Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, waits to marshal out an F-16 Fighting Falcon at Aviano Air Base, Italy. The F-16 flew an air strike mission against targets in the former Republic of Yugoslavia.*

## Kosovo campaign continues

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Chamber of Commerce, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan anticipated the hardships of airmen at the front lines. "We all know the key to all successful operations is the dedicated, skilled airmen who overcome tremendous difficulties and still manage to execute their mission so superbly," he said.

The challenges of the Allied Force mission became even more profound as NATO reported an ever-growing number of civilians fleeing Kosovo and Serb reprisals.

With refugees streaming across Kosovo's borders in what has been called the greatest mass exodus since World War II, NATO moved into Phase II of Allied Force March 28. The air campaign is now targeting Yugoslav ground command centers and forces around the clock to stop "senseless ethnic cleansing."

A-10 Thunderbolt IIs, meanwhile, were getting ready to fly their first Allied Force missions.

Also, five B-1B Lancer bombers from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., are joining Allied Force operations in Europe where B-2 Spirit bombers made their combat debut on the first night of the battle. About 10 more aerial tankers will also go to the theater.

Each B-1B can carry up to 84 Mark 82 conventional 500-pound bombs in addition to 30 artillery cluster bomb unit munitions.

## Anthrax vaccine safe, effective

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where, anytime.

Labeled the "poor man's atomic bomb," anthrax tops the DOD list of potential biological weapons. Relatively easy and cheap to produce, this naturally occurring organism is difficult to detect and treat, is easily weaponized and highly lethal.

Roadman was part of a four-person panel led by Dr. Sue Bailey, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, that testified March 24 during the House Committee on Government Reform's oversight of the DOD's force-wide anthrax immunization program. Lt. Gen. Ron Blanck, Army surgeon general, and Rear Adm. Todd Fisher, Navy deputy surgeon general, also testified.

As pro and anti-anthrax groups prepared to testify, committee chairman Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn., said, "We will follow [the anthrax vaccination program] until we are sure medical force protection means assuring the long-term health of U.S.

forces, not just short-term mission capability."

According to Bailey's testimony, 223,000 service members, including 65,000 airmen, have received a total of 600,000 actual immunizations under the program.

However, about 200 people have balked at the mandatory immunization.

Many say it boils down to overall trust in what they call the Defense Department's poor track record concerning health issues. They point to controversies surrounding Gulf War illnesses, the specter of

Agent Orange during the Vietnam Conflict and, going even further back, radiation testing at the advent of the Atomic Age.

Calling the secretary of defense's May 1998 decision to immunize the total force a deliberate and detailed process, Bailey testified that the program is built on many lessons learned over the last several years and the department's strong commitment to force health protection.

"The anthrax vaccination immunization program employs a very different and effective approach, incorporating a safe and efficacious vaccine, effective risk communication, extensive immunization tracking and strong command leadership with medical support," she said.

The Army surgeon general told the committee that risk communication — education, talking to people — is taken very seriously when it comes to the anthrax vaccine.

"We have a goal in all of the services," Blanck said, "that no

one gets a needle in their arm without having been educated, having been briefed, often having seen the leadership getting their immunizations first, and having had the chance to ask questions and to get pertinent and appropriate answers."

***Labeled the "poor man's atomic bomb," anthrax tops the DOD list of potential biological weapons. ... this naturally occurring organism is difficult to detect and treat, is easily weaponized and highly lethal.***

Roadman told the committee that the Air Force has recently established an integrated process team on the immunization program.

*This article is available in its entirety online.*





*Air Force efforts to manage effects of the Y2K bug are well under way to minimize any decrease in mission or system performance. Meeting this challenge is critical to maintaining information superiority and involves systems from the headquarters to the field. Here, Senior Airman Michael Hael maintains a mobile generator used in support of combat computer equipment that make communication in today's expeditionary Air Force possible.*

*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Lance Cheung*

## Aircraft to weapons: AF prepares for Y2K

**continued from Page 1**

Defense in response to a deadline set by the Office of Management and Budget for Y2K compliance: making sure computers are ready to handle the "00" time element as Jan. 1, 2000, approaches.

The Air Force is assessing everything from airplanes and weapons to thermostats. Any system found date-dependent and susceptible to the Y2K problem is being fixed, replaced or has a workaround solution, according to the person overseeing the service's computer compliance.

"The good news is that the Air Force is making excellent progress on fixing the Y2K problem," said Jim Neighbors, chief of the Year 2000 Management Office at Air Force Communications Agency at Scott.

The March 31 completion date for all systems is mandated across DOD and the military services. The Air Force projects April 1 completion rates to be 96 percent for mission-critical systems and 95 percent for non-mission-critical systems.

"The systems not compliant are

for reasons we understand," said Brig. Gen. Gary Ambrose, director of the Air Force Year 2000 Office. "Some are systems we'll retire before the end of the year. Some are systems we're using that must be fixed. Some developmental systems aren't going to be ready until later. We know when they're going to be complete, and on the first of January 2000, all of them will be compliant."

"Clearly, Air Force's Y2K status overall is good news," Neighbors said. "The bad news is that the final rollover date won't slip. All Air Force organizations are being stressed to the maximum to get systems completed. Y2K is an extremely critical responsibility added to an already high operations tempo.

"Every system continues to follow a strict set of guidelines until everything is Y2K compliant. We track all late systems, we know why they're late, and when they're completed. We post daily error and late status reports on the Air Force Y2K web site at <http://year2000.af.mil>," Neighbors said.

*This article is available in its entirety online.*

## 'Melissa' and 'Papa' infect computers

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appeared in email messages titled "Important Message From ..." DOD computer officials advise users not to pass the email along or open the email's attachment. Opening the attachment will automatically forward a copy of the email and virus to the first 50 contacts in your personal address book and contaminate your system.

If spread, the virus causes serious damage to network servers because of the amount of email each processes. To the user, however, the effect is not so severe.

"Papa," meanwhile, has more potential for harm. This virus sends itself to the first 60 people in a user's address book.

*This article is available in its entirety online.*

## House starts work on FY 2000 budget

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Senate-approved 4.8 percent military pay raise starting Jan. 1. No further action will be taken until April after Congress resumes its session.

The bill expresses the sense of the Congress that:

■ The United States must provide its armed forces with sufficient resources to maintain the capability to execute the national military strategy with minimal risk; and

■ A comprehensive effort is required to revitalize and sustain the all-volunteer force and to address the decline in the quality of life for military personnel and their families, especially with regard to military housing, pay and retirement benefits.



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